



MONTANA FISH, WILDLIFE & PARKS

CAC R2 Hunting Season Workgroup Meeting Minutes

July 9, 2019

FWP Region 2 Office, back building, 6:00 P.M.

(Notes by Mike Thompson from a special meeting of the Region 2 Citizens Advisory Committee and Invited Stakeholders)

Attendees: 25, including R2 biologists (4), Randy Arnold, Joe Jaquith and Mike Thompson
Guest representation: Anaconda Sportsmen's Club, Back Country Hunters and Anglers, Hellgate Hunters and Anglers

Purpose: introduced by Mike Thompson

- Collaboratively develop recommendations for Region 2 elk hunting seasons, as per the biennial season-setting process for 2020-2021.
- Bring landowners, hunters, other stakeholders to the table to interact with each other
- Be open; asked that participants share what's on their minds at the meeting, rather than leave the meeting with questions unasked and unresolved.
- Asked the group of their expectations from the anticipated process of 2-4 meetings.

Notes from comments in response to members' expectations from the process:

- Denley Loge: West of Missoula, everyone wants the elk numbers up. Saw success with the new B tags. There was an incident last season with elk trapped in a bad spot at Tarkio.
- Chris Marchion: Make sure that there are alternatives that reflect people's concerns. We got blindsided by shoulder seasons. We need enough discussion so that proposals reflect alternatives. Low calf ratios, low bull ratios, and populations below objective. Needs to be some biology. I don't see elk in the mountains; they are down in the alfalfa. Their age and structure is disastrous.
- Jim Olson: Bull ratios have been down for 10-15 years. Generally in the Bitterroot, things are going okay.
- Chris Marchion: Concerned about wolf and lion populations in HD 214.
- Tim Aldrich: Looking for "informed engagement." Typically, sportsmen see tentative proposals for hunting seasons for the first time in December. We want to bring more people together early in the game. We are doing that here.
- Jim Olson: We've been doing that in the Bitterroot.
- Chris Marchion: People have not been heard. Alternatives. Biology.

Do we have the right people at the table?

- Are the bowhunters represented here? Suggest that a representative be included.

- We could be capturing landowners better. Heard of Denny Iverson, Brent or Brian Mannix in the Blackfoot.
- Bill Mitchell offered that he has been talking to a lot of landowners and can carry a lot of those perspectives to our meetings.
- Commissioner Byorth, per statute, has a role and should be invited.
- Matt Graveley: Landowners expect that their concerns will be represented at this meeting by the biologists.
- People don't understand the existing regulations.
- Most folks in our area support the antlerless permits and not the B licenses.
- Thompson raised the topic of antlerless permits vs B licenses for the next meeting.
- Denley Loge: Wolves need to be managed by WMU because we manage other carnivores by Management Units and it provides flexibility to meet local needs.
- Laurie Johnston: Would like to see a wolf update at a CAC meeting.
- It would be good for our FWP Access People and local Wardens to be available for questions, especially regarding the Upper Clark Fork.

Biologist presentations of elk trends and harvest for their hunting districts. Questions and answers by each biologist. The updated and complete R2 Wildlife Quarterly was given to each participant for reference, and Scott Eggeman and Julie Golla also handed out hard copies of tables and graphs for the Blackfoot and Upper Clark Fork.

How should we prioritize the Hunting Districts for our discussion?

- Matt Graveley: The most concerning districts are in the Upper Clark Fork. The Blackfoot would be next.
- Adam Shaw: I echo that.

Shoulder seasons

- Tom Puchlerz: Send out the performance criteria that were agreed upon.

Next Meeting: August 6, 6:00 P.M., at the Region 2 Office. Dinner (pizza?) provided.